cover is very low? Because, the experience in our State, Meghalaya, has been that the ban imposed by the Supreme Court has been very beneficial in a sense that within a few years after the ban, the forest cover has gone up. Is there any proposal to ban felling of trees in those States where the forest cover is low?

SHRI T.R. BAALU: Sir, there is already a ban on felling of trees. Unless and until, a working plan is there, there is a ban on felling of trees.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

Siding track from KRIBHCO to Hajira

*186. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:

SHRI BACHANI LEKHRAJ:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether keeping in view the Industrial growth of the area around Hajira Port to it's hinterland;

(b) whether Railways will consider extending the siding track of KRIBHCO up to Hajira; and

(c) if so, by when this work will be taken up?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NITISH KUMAR): (a) to (c) Although industrial development is taking place around Hajira Port, the decision about connectivity of part to hinterland and alignment of line through KRIBHCO (Krishak Bharati Cooperative Ltd.) siding or otherwise can only be taken after techno-economic feasibility study is done for the project. Such a study is being done on behalf of Gujarat Maritime Board by RITES (Rail India Technical & Economic Services).

Expansion of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant

*192. DR. C. NARAYANA REDDY: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to expand the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details and the estimated cost thereof; and

(c) by when the proposed expansion is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI BRAJ KISHORE TRIPATHY): (a) to (c) A proposal for installation of the IVth Coke Oven Battery is under active consideration of the Government. A Statement giving details of the proposal is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

Details of the proposal for installation of 4th Coke Oven Battery at Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd. (Visakhapatnam Steel Plant), Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh

The Proposed 4th Coke Oven Battery is to meet the short fall in Blast Furnace (BF) Coke in view of the increased production of hot metal and the shortfall that will arise when the rebuilding programme of the three existing coke oven batteries is taken up.

The installation of 4th Coke Oven Battery is a technical necessity for sustaining plant operations at higher efficiency.

The 4th Coke Oven Battery will act as a replacement battery when the existing batteries are taken up for repair/rebuilding. After the rebuilding is completed this battery will function as an additional battery.

The 4th Coke Oven Battery will be 7 meters tall and will consist of 67 ovens and will be based on Russian technology. It will thus be similar to the existing three batteries.

There is a provision in the plant lay-out hence the proposed new battery will be installed in the existing coke oven battery complex adjacent to coke oven battery No. 3.

The 4th Coke Oven Battery is estimated to cost Rs. 303.00 crores.

The entire cost will be borne by the company from its internal resources.

The estimated time for completion of the 4th Coke Oven Battery project is 36 months.

Approval of the Planning Commission and the Public Investment Board has already been obtained and the proposal is now processed for obtaining final approval of the Government.

Service Road to Bogibeel Bridge

*193. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) status of the Bogibeel Bridge construction work showing sectoral outlay for the current year, progress made and target set including that for protection dam;

(b) whether part of railway track at Samarajan Area of Dhemaji District and the service road for Bogibeel Bridge approach was washed away by floods due to inadequate protection measures;

(c) if so, the remedial action taken thereon;

(d) whether Samarajan is breached every year due to unscientific and unplanned restoration work; and

(e) if so, amount of expenditure incurred and plan, if any, for permanent solution?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NITISH KUMAR): (a) The final location survey has been completed. Land acquisition, supply of boulders has been taken up. The work of approach road to bridge site on both North and South banks are in advanced stage of completion. Earthwork, minor and major bridges for Railway embankment has been taken up wherever land has been made available. An outlay of Rs. 60 crore has been provided for the project during 2003-2004. The project is targeted for completion by April, 2008.

(b) Portions of Railway track at Kms. 356/5-7 and 357/1-2 between Gogamukh and Dhemaji have been washed away by flow